

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905

Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic

(814) 244-4063

The Sunday of the Last Judgment (02.19.2023.)

Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did

it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. **(KJV)**

The Church has arrived today at Meatfare Sunday also known as the Sunday of the Last Judgment. This is a day of transition for the believer's body, mind and soul in preparation for the Lenten Journey.

Today is the last day for believers to eat meat until Pascha. Conscious awareness of the Lenten Journey is to increase at this time. Purification and care of the soul are to be at the forefront of the mind.

This Sunday focuses on daily personal relationships. Daily relationships and encounters with others determine where a believer will experience eternity. The Lord Jesus Christ is identified with each person met in daily life.

Today's Gospel examines our experiences with strangers, the sick, the suffering and the imprisoned. Christ's Second Coming and the Final Judgement will consider the way we treat strangers, the sick, needy and the imprisoned.

Today is a time for honest personal assessment of our relationship with Jesus Christ. If we say we love Christ, we will demonstrate Christ's love in the way we live in the Church and the way we treat others in daily life.

Honoring the Lenten Journey enables believers to become more like Christ and to treat others in ways pleasing to Christ. Honoring the Great Fast is a conscious effort of rejecting sin in life and living in ways pleasing to Christ.

Honoring Great Lent intends to fill the believer's heart, mind and soul with Christ. The food we eat, the thoughts we entertain and the activities we engage in will determine if we are serious about loving and living in Jesus Christ.

The way we treat others determines how we will spend eternity. Now is the time to begin anew in Jesus Christ. Now is the time to treat others we meet in daily life with Christian love.

Today is the day to reject sin, repent and center life in Christ. Today is the day to see Jesus Christ in each person we meet. God's goodness and mercy give the believer the constant ability to repent and to begin anew.

The Church offers Jesus Christ's welcoming embrace to persons rejecting the way of sin and seeking to repent. Great Lent fosters and encourages repentance, increased prayer and fasting.

The Church provides nourishment and teachings to guide the believer from repentance to the Heavenly Kingdom. The Church is the foretaste of and is the centuries-old -well-travelled road to the Kingdom.

Each day believers have the ability to live in Jesus Christ. Each relationship is an experience with Christ. Conscious use of the mind, heart and soul determine the degree each moment of life focuses on Christ.

Great Lent has a specific structure each year to benefit believers in Christ. This Sunday and each of the forthcoming days until Pascha will enrich, renew and strengthen participating believers in Christ.

Each moment offers renewal in Christ. Serious decision making is necessary to pray and to embrace Christ. Each individual chooses the use and direction of the heart, mind and soul.

Today is an important day in the Church. The Second Coming of Christ and the Final Judgment are realities facing each person. Each person determines the outcome of the final judgment by the way he or she lives.

The way a person lives creates the record for the Great and Final Judgment. The Church teaches, illuminates and offers the pathway to eternal life and God's Heavenly Kingdom.

Embracing the way of Christ in the Church is completely voluntary. Honoring Great Lent is completely voluntary. Wise believers choose to invest in Great Lent and in the Kingdom of God which are experienced through the Church.

Meatfare Sunday-The Sunday of the Last Judgment. Afterfeast of the Meeting of Our Lord. St. Photius of Constantinople; St. Boucolus, Bishop of Smyrna.

Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid **St Nikolai of Zhicha**

1. THE HIJEROMARTYR [PRIESTLY-MARTYR] CHARALAMPUS

This great saint, Charalampus, was a bishop in Magnesia who suffered for Christ in his 113th year. When a terrible persecution began during the reign of Emperor Septimius Severus, the elderly Charalampus did not hide from the persecutors. Instead, he freely and openly preached the Christian Faith. He endured all tortures as though he were in someone else's body. When they skinned him alive, the forgiving elder said to the emperor's soldiers: "Thank you, my brethren, for in scraping my old body you renew my spirit for a new eternal life." He worked many miracles and converted many to the Faith. Even the emperor's daughter, Galina,

abandoned the idolatry of her father and become a Christian. Condemned to death and brought to the place of execution, St. Charalampus raised his hands to heaven and prayed to God for all people, that God would grant them bodily health and spiritual salvation and that He would multiply their fruit of the earth: "O Lord, Thou knowest that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Thy grace on all!" After prayer, this holy elder gave up his soul to God before the executioner lowered the sword on his neck. He suffered in the year 202 A.D. The emperor's daughter, Galina, removed his body and honorably buried it.

2. THE VENERABLE PROCHORUS, THE ORACH-EATER^{*)}

Prochorus was a miracle-worker of the Monastery of the Kiev Caves. He is called the orach-eater because, during the time that he lived in the Monastery of the Caves, he did not taste bread. Instead, he fed on orach, mixing it in his own way, and from it he prepared a type of bread. Whenever he would give someone his orach bread with a blessing, the bread tasted sweet, as though prepared from honey. If, however, someone stole the bread, it was as bitter as wormwood. One time, when there was a shortage of salt in Russia, Prochorus distributed ashes to the people in place of salt. The ashes that he distributed with his blessing were as salt; however, the ashes that people took on their own remained ordinary ashes. Prince Svyatopolk ordered that all the ashes from Prochorus's cell be taken to his palace with neither the permission nor the blessing of the monk. When the ashes were removed, those who tasted them were convinced that they were ashes and not salt. Then Prochorus told the people who came to him for salt to go to the emperor's palace and, when the prince threw the ashes out of his palace, to take them and carry them home for salt. The people did so, and again the ashes were salt. Having become convinced, the prince himself was filled with respect and love toward the holy man. When Prochorus died in the year 1107 A.D., the prince, with his own hands, placed him in the tomb alongside the great Russian saints, Anthony and Theodosius.

^{*)} *Orach*: any plant of the genus *Atriplex*, cultivated for use like spinach. --
Trans.

HYMN OF PRAISE SAINT CHARALAMPUS

The inexperienced sword was brandished over Charalampus,
only to be lowered!

The saint knelt and, a petition to God, raised:
"O Lord, release them!
Of all sinful men, absolve the sins;
have mercy again.
Bless their labor and grant abundant
fruit to the fields.
Let them have everything; they are flesh and blood;
let them sing to Thee.
Oh, grant them health, health and joy;
let them remember Thee!
Drive away every evil, save them from misery,
have mercy on them all,
And after death, to Paradise take their souls.
Lord Have mercy!
Whoever prays to Thee
and mentions my name,
Because of my suffering, help him,
O God, help him for my sake!"
Then came a voice from heaven: "I accept your prayer;
now render Me your soul!"
The saint released his soul and flew to Paradise,
before the falling of the sword!

REFLECTION

Many of the serious infirmities that befall a man have their cause, known or unknown, in his past. The causes of such serious infirmities as, let us say, mental disorder, are nothing other than the transgression of the moral law of God. When St. Charalampus was being tortured, the persecuting emperor learned of his miracle-working power. The emperor ordered an insane man to be brought before Charalampus, to see if Charalampus could heal him. The devil had tormented this man for thirty-five years, driving him into the wilderness and hills and hurling him into bogs and chasms. When this deranged man approached Charalampus, the demon sensed a sweet-smelling fragrance emanating from the holy man and shouted: "I beg you, O servant of God, do not torment me before my time, but command me and I will depart. And, if you wish, I will tell you how it happened that I entered into this man." The saint commanded the demon to relate the story. The demon said: "This man wanted to steal from his neighbor and thought to

himself: 'If I don't kill the man first, I will not be able to seize his goods.' So he went and killed his neighbor. Having caught him in the act, I entered him and, behold, I have dwelt in him for thirty-five years." Upon hearing this, the saint of God commanded the demon to depart from the man immediately and to leave him in peace. The demon departed, and the demented man was restored to health and became tranquil.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the Lord Jesus as the Beauty of the entire created world:

1. As the Beauty of all created things, a Beauty dulled from fear and the melancholy of sin;
2. As the Beauty of man, the most rational being in the material world, a Beauty dulled by fear and the melancholy of sin;
3. As the Beauty of a pure, mental, bodiless world of the angels;
4. As the Beauty of the Holy Trinity, revealed by Him and through Him.

HOMILY

on the sin of those who assert that they can see

"If ye were blind, ye should have no sin" (John 9:41).

These words were spoken to the Jews by Him Who gave them the Law through the prophets, that the Law might serve them as the sight of the soul. The Jews received that sight, but they intentionally and evilly shut their eyes. That is why the righteous Lord spoke these righteous words to them.

These are words of true justice, yesterday and today and forever, for a blind man has no sin if he tramples upon someone else's crop or if he takes someone else's garment instead of his own. If he who has sight commits this, he will be committing a sin and will incur punishment. If he who has eyes intentionally closes his eyes and does this, he also will be committing a sin and will incur punishment.

Nevertheless, what can be said about those who have received baptism and chrismation, the two eyes of the soul, and still sin as those who are unbaptized? At the Last Judgment, they will not be treated as those who are born blind, rather they will be judged as transgressors who have willfully disfigured and blinded themselves.

And what can be said about those who receive the other Mysteries of grace in the fullness of Orthodoxy, having before them the examples of the saints, and constantly listening to the warnings and admonitions of God's Church, but who nevertheless depart and go astray? At the Last Judgment such people will not be able to justify themselves by any type of blindness; rather they will be judged as

transgressors who have disfigured themselves and others around them with blindness.

O Awesome Lord, save us from sin. O Merciful Lord, open our eyes to the path of salvation.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- ❖ **THURSDAY (February 23rd) Holy Hieromartyr Haralambos 09:30 AM - Divine Liturgy**
- ❖ **SATURDAY (February 25th) - PARALYSIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION TO SAINT NECTARIOS - 05:00 PM - Confession**
- ❖ **SUNDAY (February 26th) - Cheesefare Sunday- THE VENERABLE SIMON [MIROTOGIVI] THE MYRRH-GUSHER - 10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy**

Donations February 12, 2023

Offering - \$ 1,756.00 Candles - \$63.00
Dues - \$100 Donations - \$194.50

Large Candles

In Memory of Charles Bulich from Olga Bulich
In Memory of Mildred Tumbas from Milica Knepp
In Memory of Vinny Czubak from Jeannette Czubak
In Memory of Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Kathleen McDowell
In Memory of Damenja & Lazo Gjurich from Diane and Dan Tomak
In Memory of Amelia & Joseph Kondas from Richard Kondas

**Fish Fries begin Friday, February 24, 2023
And run through Friday, April 7, 2023
Please see Donna or Suzette to secure your
work schedule!**

The church is selling t-shirts and sweatshirts. Forms are available in the candle room (or see Carol McAllister). Make checks payable to American Eagle Printing. Deadline is Sunday, March 5, 2023. Return orders and payment to Carole McAllister. There will be no extra orders taken.

Don't forget to order your Easter Flowers!

Join us today, Meat Fare Sunday, for a Luncheon following Divine Liturgy

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, February 19, 2023 - Kolo Meeting

Sunday, February 26, 2023 - Cheese Fare Sunday Luncheon

Sunday, March 5th - Sunday of Orthodoxy
Service to be held at St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church
111 Alberta Ave - Johnstown, PA 15905 - 5:00 PM

Sunday, March 26th - Lenten Vespers
We will be hosting vespers beginning at 5:00 PM

Sunday, April 9th - Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 16th - PASCHA!

Polka-Fest June 2-4, 2023

Band of Brothers - July 13-15 & 19-22, 2023

Taste of Serbia - August 12, 2023

Slavic Fest - September 15-16, 2023



FLOWERS FOR PASCHA



Provided by SEADS Garden Center

| No. | | Price | Total \$ |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| | 4 ½" - Bluebells | \$5.50 | |
| | 4 ½" - Mini Daffodils | \$6.50 | |
| | 5" - Gerber Daisy | \$7 | |
| | 6 ½" - Daffodils | \$12 | |
| | 6 ½ " - Hyacinths | \$12 | |
| | 6 ½ " - Tulips | \$12 | |
| | 6 ½ " - Martha Washington Geraniums | \$13 | |
| | 6 ½ " - Mums | \$14 | |
| | 6 ½ " - White Lily Single Stem | \$15 | |
| | 8 ½ " - Lily Double | \$28 | |
| | 8 ½ " - Hydrangea | \$24 | |
| | | Total | |
| | | = | |

Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

Paid _____ Check # _____

Please return to Suzette Gardenhour no later than Sunday, March 19th . If you are out of town - payment and completed form can be mailed to:

St. Nicholas Church
1001 St. Clair Road, Johnstown PA 15905

Or contact Suzette at 814-421-1276 or shliva16@gmail.com